United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

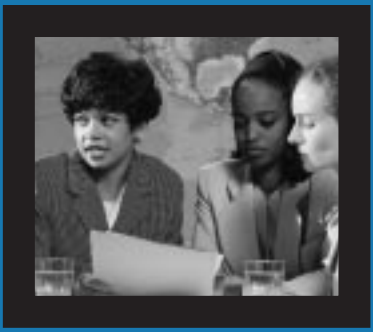
EPA505-B-98-003
November 1998
www.epa.gov/swerffrr/

Solid Waste and Emergency Response (5101)

Federal Facilities Restoration And Reuse Office

Federal Cleanups That Put Citizens First

Facing the Challenge



From nuclear weapons plants and military bases to landfills and fuel distribution stations, the U.S. government operates thousands of facilities across the country that promote the security and welfare of Americans. Constant improvements in technology and national security now permit many of these facilities y be transformed for other beneficial uses. After years of vital service, however, some of these facilities contain environmental contamination from hazardous wastes, unexploded ordnance, radioactive wastes, or other toxic substances. In fact, more than 57,000 federal sites are potentially contaminated—a challenge that will cost billions of dollars to address. To reduce the costs of cleanup and reuse of such sites, EPA's Federal Facilities Restoration and Reuse Office (FFRRO) coordinates creative solutions that protect both human health and the environment. Such solutions restore facilities so they can once again serve an important role in the economy and welfare of local communities and our country.

Federal Agency	Number of Potentially Contaminated Sites	Estimated Cost to Address
Department of Defense	More than 21,000	$30 billion
Department of Energy	More than 10,000	$160-350 billion
Department of Interior	More than 26,000	$4-8 billion

Finding Solutions

In 1994, EPA established FFRRO in response to the challenges contamination poses at federal facilities. FFRRO works with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and other federal agencies to develop creative, cost-effective solutions to environmental problems. FFRRO's overall mission is to facilitate faster, more effective, and less costly cleanup and reuse of federal facilities.

The hallmarks of FFRRO's work—and the keys to its success—are partnering, innovation, and community involvement.

FFRRO involves citizens groups, tribal parties, and state and local agencies in the cleanup process through dialogue that respects the unique needs of each community. This approach has enabled FFRRO to make progress at federal facilities while protecting and strengthening human health, the environment, and local economies.

Developing Partnerships

FFRRO has formed or participates in several partnerships with DoD, DOE, and other stakeholders to facilitate faster, more effective, and less costly cleanups. For example, working through EPA's regional offices, FFRRO helps DoD implement President Clinton's Fast-Track Cleanup Program. This program accelerates cleanups and speeds the economic recovery of communities affected by military base closures.

A major success of this program is the formation of base realignment and closure (BRAC) cleanup teams (BCTs) at 108 fast-track installations. In these teams, representatives of EPA, DoD, and state agencies engineer commonsense approaches to cleanups by setting common goals and priorities. Since 1995, BCTs have helped eliminate over 250 years of cleanup time and $250 million in potential project costs.

Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site Denver, Colorado

Rocky Flats was established in 1952 to produce plutonium and other metal components for nuclear weapons. EPA Region 8, DOE, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment formed a strong, collective partnership to develop the Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement, which set cleanup expectations and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for site closure. This team approach reduced duplication of effort and will enable DOE to work toward completing all closure work four years ahead of schedule. A comprehensive public involvement program at the site ensures the participation of stakeholders.

Bergstrom Air Force Base Austin, Texas

This base was placed on a fast-track cleanup schedule so it could house the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, slated to open in 1999. A team of city and state agencies, EPA Region 6, and the Air Force Base Conversion Agency is expediting site investigation and cleanup plans to meet the airport's opening deadline. Relocating Austin's airport will save the city the estimated $200 million it would spend to build a new airport, and ease the noise problems at the current site.

Fostering Innovation

FFRRO encourages agencies to use innovative processes to improve environmental restoration. Presumptive remedies, for example, can hasten the cleanup of similar types of sites. Presumptive remedies are preferred technologies, determined by historical patterns of remedy selection, for common categories of sites. By using them, site managers can narrow the number of technologies they need to consider, and instead focus on data collection and site assessment.

To improve site assessment and remediation, FFRRO promotes alternative technologies. Alternatives to pump and treat systems and landfills, such as enhanced bioremediation and phytoremediation, can make cleanups faster, more effective, and less costly.

Umatilla Chemical Depot Hermiston, Oregon

To clean up explosives and metals in soil, EPA Region 10 and the Army successfully advocated the use of innovative treatment technologies (such as bioremediation and solidification/ stabilization) and on-site analytical technologies. These methods have slashed cleanup costs by more than $13 million and reduced sampling costs from $250 to just $60 per sample.

Fort Ord Monterey, California

At this facility, EPA Region 9 proposed a creative solution to cleanup problems that saved $11 million: excavate material from one area of the site for use in the cleanup alternative at another portion of the site. Region 9 also encouraged the Army to use a streamlined decision-making process. This and other innovations put the base realignment plan five years ahead of schedule.

Promoting Community Involvement

Experience has shown that cleanups at federal facilities improve when local stakeholders share information and become involved in environmental decision-making. FFRRO's *Blueprint for Action* outlines a comprehensive program to increase stakeholder involvement. Through regional coordination, training seminars, cooperative partnerships, research projects, and technical and financial assistance, FFRRO supports the following key objectives of the *Blueprint for Action*:

- Foster open dialogue for environmental solutions.
- Promote partnerships among environmental groups, government agencies, labor organizations, and community groups.
- Ensure environmental justice.
- Strengthen stakeholder involvement networks.

One avenue for meeting these objectives is the formation of Restoration Advisory Boards (RABs) at military bases. Comprised of representatives from DoD, EPA, the state agency, and the local community, RABs provide a forum for discussion and exchange of cleanup information between government agencies and the public. RABs have been essential to improving cleanups and reducing costs. To date, more than 300 RABs have been formed nationwide at NPL and non-NPL sites.

Like RABs, 12 Site Specific Advisory Boards (SSABs) have been formed to develop consensus recommendations on cleanup issues at DOE properties. Comprised of representatives from DOE, EPA, the state agency, and the local community, SSABs develop consensus recommendations and help DOE make informed cleanup decisions.

Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Michigan

An active RAB at this facility gave the community a voice in cleanup and reuse decisions. The community identified the housing area of the base as one of the most valuable properties to be transferred to private hands for use as low-income housing. The BCT responded by giving the housing area the highest priority in preparing property for transfer. Working with a local community service agency, the BCT moved and renovated base housing to replace substandard housing in six counties. About 75 families benefited from what is now a national model for reuse of military housing units.

U.S. Army Cameron Station Alexandria, Virginia

Keeping local residents informed about cleanup actions at the base was important to Cameron Station's RAB. Comprised of private citizens and local government officials, the RAB worked cooperatively with the Army, EPA, and state representatives to write a report that educated nearby residents about remedial activities at the site. The first of its kind, the report became a model for other RABs. As a result of the RAB's involvement in the cleanup and reuse plans for Cameron Station, the community is gaining 2,000 new housing units and commercial and recreational facilities. Additionally, the city of Alexandria gained increased property tax revenues and commercial growth.

For More Information

For more information about FFRRO, call or write:

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Visit the FFRRO home page for more information about federal facility cleanups, including success stories, descriptions of new initiatives, policy and guidance documents, and a calendar of upcoming meetings and conferences.